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THOMAS SHILLITOE

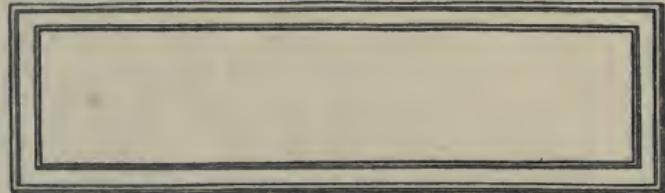
SHOEMAKER AND MINISTER.

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AND OTHER WORTHIES OF THE OLDEN TIME.

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LONDON :

JAMES NISBET & CO., 21 BERNERS STREET, W.

THOMAS SHILLITOE,

Shoemaker and Minister.

BY

FRANCES ANNE BUDGE,

AUTHOR OF "ANNALS OF THE EARLY FRIENDS," "THE BARCLAYS OF URY,"
"RICHARD DAVIES, AND OTHER SKETCHES," "A MISSIONARY LIFE:
STEPHEN GRELLET," "THOMAS ELLWOOD, AND OTHER
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CHAPTER I.

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"You would have me refuse tears to men for whom Christ shed His blood ! To whom would you have me show pity if not to sinners?"

—ST. FRANCIS DE SALES.

CHAPTER I.

"As far as I have heard and read, the really great things in the world have not been done by great companies nor great men, but by one man here, and another woman there; whom the Lord chose because He could trust them."

MRS. SEWELL

A HUNDRED years ago, on a winter's day, if we could have looked into the workshop of a certain shoemaker at Tottenham, we might have seen, in the Quaker garb of the day, a man in early middle life, small of stature and most timid in temperament, employed in cutting out leather for his men. Why does his face wear an anxious, troubled look? A minister of the Gospel, he had for some time been greatly perplexed by the belief that the Lord was calling him to religious service in another part of England, the accomplishment of which would occupy considerable time, whilst the obstacles in the way of leaving home seemed insurmountable. It was, as he says, "a fresh trial of faith in the all-sufficiency of the power of Him who, when He calls forth, can qualify not only for the work, but amply care also

for the stuff left behind and those left in charge of it."

His wife did not understand the business, and as she kept no servant was much engaged with her children. The only person to be left in charge was an assistant of unsteady conduct, who had shown symptoms of mental derangement ; and depredations of thieves had been frequent in the neighbourhood. Truly it must have been a trial of faith when that day the inward summons to the distant service was renewed... Yet presently that troubled expression changed for one of confidence and peace, and the knife with which he was cutting the leather fell from his hand. He says that as he yielded up his will to do God's bidding, the promise spoken to his heart was as plain as if spoken to his ear :—

"I will be more than bolts and bars to thy outward habitation ; more than a master to thy servants, for I can restrain their wandering minds ; more than a husband to thy wife, and a parent to thy infant children."

This shoemaker was Thomas Shillitoe, who was born at Holborn, London, in 1754. He was only twelve years old when his father took the "Three Tuns" public-house at Islington, and thus the lad's life became a greatly exposed one. Still worse were his surroundings when he was apprenticed to a

grocer in the lowest part of Portsmouth. Yet in the midst of all the wickedness around, the Lord awakened him to some serious thoughtfulness, and this led him to exchange his situation at Portsmouth for one in London, as assistant to a grocer, whose influence over him was good. It was at this time that he became acquainted with a distant relative who was a member of the Society of Friends, with whom he began to attend Friends' meetings on Sunday mornings. The afternoon of that day he usually spent at some place of public resort or amusement; but again the Holy Spirit convicted him of sin. He now felt strongly attracted to the meetings of Friends, and attended them in the afternoon as well as in the morning. The more faithfully he gave heed to such impressions of duty the more did he long for an acquaintance with God, and earnest were his prayers that the Lord would not leave him again, nor suffer him to become the prey of his soul's adversary.

"As resignation was brought about in me to yield to the purifying operation of the Holy Ghost and of fire, a willingness that the fire of God's word and power should again begin the necessary separation between the precious and the vile, corresponding fruits were brought forth in me, and manifested by my outward conduct."

Soon young Shillitoe was told by his father that he would rather have followed him to his grave than that he should have gone amongst the Quakers. He then ordered him to leave the house at a week's notice. Ere long he obtained a situation in a London bank, where he found that very few of his new companions were acquainted with that work of God in the soul for the increase of which he so much longed, and that there was no safety in any situation without prayer and watchfulness. He writes, "When unfaithful by suffering the slavish fear of man to lord it over me, I was sensible of inward weakness following my unfaithfulness, by the withdrawing of the quickening influence of the Spirit and power of Christ."

One part of Shillitoe's work for his employer was to purchase lottery tickets for country correspondents, a kind of business which he soon felt it was not right for him to transact. It was no light trial to give up a good situation in a first-rate bank, but he could do no otherwise. He then earnestly besought the Lord for guidance as to the manner in which he should earn a livelihood, and says that the answer came as clearly to the ear of his soul as ever did words to his outward hearing :— That he must be willing to humble himself and learn the trade of a shoemaker. Great was his

perplexity ; he doubted if he could thus earn enough to get the bare necessaries of life ; his parents' wrath became more violent than before, and well-meaning acquaintance tried hard to dissuade him from taking a course which they thought a very foolish one ; but a motherly friend said, "I am for leaving thee to the great Master's guidance." His clerkship was resigned, the plain though fashionable sword which he had hitherto worn was laid aside, and more than half of his small savings were handed over to a shoemaker in Southwark, who taught him the practical part of the trade. He now worked hard and fared hard, and doubtless learnt fresh lessons of trust.

Much of his business life up to this time had been spent with uncongenial companions, but his new handicraft could often be pursued in solitude, and it is easy to imagine that this quiet sphere of work afforded fresh opportunities for communion with the Lord. After a while the conviction arose in his heart that if he were faithful, a gift in the ministry of the Gospel would be intrusted to him ; and earnest were his secret prayers for heavenly guidance in so responsible a calling. He was about the age of twenty-four when he first spoke a few words in meeting, an act of faithfulness which brought great peace to his mind.

"But," he writes, "I found by experience, to my great sorrow, that it is a truth that Satan can transform himself into an angel of light, and when he cannot effect his evil purpose upon us by causing us to lag behind our good Guide, he will then try us in another way by endeavouring to hurry us on before."

At this time he was living at Tottenham, where his business was so successful that it became needful for him to employ two journeymen. "But above all other favours," he says, "I considered the evidence I was favoured with that this was my right place of settlement."

In his twenty-fifth year Thomas Shillitoe married; "I besought the Lord to guide me in my taking this very momentous step, and I had good ground to believe He was pleased to grant my request, and pointed out to me one who was to be my companion for life."

It was in 1790 that Shillitoe believed himself to be commissioned to visit the meetings of the Friends in Norfolk, and received the strong encouragement to faith already alluded to. He arranged his outward affairs as completely as possible before leaving home, and after three months' absence he found his family well, and his business in as good order as if it had been under his own management.

Three years later, when visiting Lincolnshire, Shillitoe on one occasion preached from a market cross to a very large gathering, no small trial of faith to a man of a sensitive and nervous temperament, and of unusual timidity. Still more formidable probably was a religious visit to the families of Friends in one part of London, yet he writes, "A renewed persuasion was awakened in me, that there is a Power above every power, who can open and none can shut, and can make a way for us in the minds of others. This in adorable mercy proved to be the case." As time went on he was much engaged in similar service.

Early in 1793 his mind was strongly impressed with the conviction that the Lord was calling him to pay a religious visit to King George III. The exceeding difficulty of obtaining such an interview, and the dread of the undertaking, made it seem well nigh impossible; but the more he tried to rid his mind of the subject the more heavily the burden of it rested on him.

In the hope that a written address to the King might suffice, he sat down repeatedly to prepare one, but only to realise that this was not the way of the Lord's will. When after a while the burden he was unwilling to bear was taken from him, bitter sorrow took its place. But again he

experienced the calming influence of Divine love, and when the call to the service was renewed he spoke of it to some Friends who helped him by their cordial sympathy and encouragement.

All efforts to obtain a private interview with the King were fruitless, and it was thought best to seek for an opportunity for speaking to him on the terrace at Windsor. George Stacey accompanied Thomas Shillitoe, and they were told that it would be best to endeavour to see the King in the stable-yard when he was getting ready to go out hunting. As he stood at the door of the stable George Stacey said to him, "This friend of mine has something to communicate to the King." Whereupon the King stepped up to Shillitoe and raised his hat, whilst his attendants placed themselves on the right and left. When walking from the inn to the stable-yard Shillitoe had felt, he says, not only like a vessel emptied of anything it ever held of a religious nature for communication to others, but as if it were washed from the very dregs. But when after some moments of silence he had uttered the words, "Hear, O King!" all fear was taken away, and for about twenty minutes he spoke what arose in his mind as a message to the monarch, who stood meanwhile in reverent attitude with the tears trick-

ling down his face. It was said that he did not go out hunting that day, but went back to the Queen and told her what had passed.

At the age of fifty-one Shillitoe thought it right to retire from business, so as to get more fully at liberty for religious service away from home. The language of the Lord to him seemed to be, "Gather up thy wares into thy house, for I have need of the residue of thy days." His income was but £100 a year, and he had five children to settle in life, but the assurance was given him that if he were faithful to the Lord the meal and oil should not fail.

When spending three weeks in Jersey, where he held several meetings, he helped the family with whom he was staying in their work in the harvest-field. A young Methodist preacher who called on him found him thus engaged, and in the course of some interesting conversation said that he should be glad to find some suitable employment, from the conviction that it would be good for both body and mind. They parted from one another in nearness of spirit.

At a meeting in the north of England, Shillitoe was much grieved at the number of disownments of its members. "I doubt not," he says, "a preventive would at times be found, if those who

accept the post of watchmen on the walls of our religious Society lived sufficiently loose from the encumbering things of this life." In another meeting he found it hard work to relieve his mind of the message given him to deliver, because of the opposition evidently felt to what was spoken in regard to the necessity of dying daily to sin, if we would come fully to experience what it is to live unto God. And again he writes of suffering from lack of "the help of the spirits of brethren rightly baptized into a desire to aid the work of the Lord."

One of the visits was to a company of very poor people at West Houghton, who were wont to assemble for worship after the manner of Friends. The house which they rented for this purpose had been used for drying wool, but was now whitewashed and fitted up as well as their narrow means would allow. In the middle were three forms, the other seats being planks supported by bricks. There were no windows, but some light was let in by a large aperture at the end of the building. At the appointed hour a company of about thirty-four met together, who seemed, he says—

"To bring good along with them into the house. In a short time as profound a silence spread over us as I ever remember to have experienced; not a few of the company under the influence of it were

humbled and bathed in tears. I could but secretly acknowledge these are they who, worshipping God in the Spirit, ‘have no confidence in the flesh.’”

Nor was this silence soon broken, and when he rose to speak the tenderness of his feelings towards that contrite company made it hard to control his emotion, and for the same cause a Friend who was with him had to resume his seat after uttering a few words. When the meeting broke up the floor was wet with tears. At one time this little meeting had been much troubled by two men who imposed on it what they called preaching, but which the worshippers felt did not come from the true source. They spoke with veneration of an old man much attached to the tenets of Friends, whom some of them had met at a barber’s shop, where at times he had discoursed on the principles of Christianity as professed by Friends. Their interest being thus awakened, they had gladly read the books he lent them; but it was not until after his death that they had met together for worship. Shillitoe and his friend shared their homely and simply-served mid-day meal, continuing to feel the preciousness of the spiritual refreshment of the meeting, and enjoying the conversation with their newly found brethren and sisters, several of whom afterwards became members of the Society of Friends. A

strong contrast to this little meeting was another, of which Shillitoe says, "Many were contenting themselves with living on the labours of others, not willing to labour to know the Lord for themselves."

During the years 1808-1811, Shillitoe was extensively engaged in religious service in Ireland. When at Waterford he visited the families of Friends; the first visit was to a family who lived on the quay; soon they were startled by a great tumult caused by a bull-baiting. Before leaving the town Shillitoe called on the Protestant bishop, who promised to do all that lay in his power to put an end to this brutal practice at Waterford, and his efforts were not in vain.

In some of the large towns he visited the public-houses, remonstrating with the hosts and with the frequenters, and seeking to awaken in them thoughts of their highest welfare. Such work must have sorely tried his sensitive heart, for he had frequently to encounter a rough reception, but often the presence of the Lord was felt even in the most depraved companies, and much deep feeling manifested.

At Waterford he could not feel satisfied without also visiting the people in their market, which he did in company with two other Friends. He says

that he was at this time labouring “under as great a load of depression and debility as human nature could well bear.” They ascended some steps which were of considerable height, and were quickly surrounded by both buyers and sellers, whose quiet and grave attention was very remarkable; many of them gave the Friends a parting blessing. At Dungannon there was a solemn leave-taking meeting, in which many of the young people were in tears, which, Shillitoe says, affected his mind not a little, hoping he had obtained a place in theirs.

At Clonmel his visits to public-houses occupied three days, on the first two of which fifty-nine calls were made. The Lord had set before his faithful servant an open door, for as he writes—

“ Nothing short of Divine interference could have made way for us in the minds of those we sat with. . . . Matters were not generally so arranged as to allow of much time being spent in a silent pause. It felt the more necessary to have the eye of the mind kept single, and the bent of it continually directed to its truest centre, whence only help can come to minister to the states of those we are called upon to labour with. My companion used often to say that it seemed as if the good Master went into the houses before us to prepare the way.”

Nevertheless, it was with a feeling of extreme dread that he set about a similar service at Kilkenny, where the inhabitants were chiefly Roman Catholics, though he afterwards saw he had caused himself needless suffering through a lack of steadfast trust in the power of Him who has the hearts of all men at His command. As the Friends went forward to Callan, they found that the priest had been prejudicing the people against them, and the doors of some houses were closed, whilst a rude crowd would gather around the strangers, in the midst of which Shillitoe sometimes stood still to show them his faith in an Almighty Preserver.

The next duty which came before him was an interview with the Roman Catholic bishop, a service which it was the more difficult to think of when he saw that the kind friends who were with him regarded it with something like dismay. They did not, however, try to dissuade him from faithfully following the guidance of his Lord. The bishop gave his unusual guests a civil reception, and placed a chair for Thomas Shillitoe opposite the sofa on which he himself took his seat. Shillitoe told him that his visits to the drinking-houses in Kilkenny had fully confirmed his fears that the laity professed to believe that the priests had full

power to forgive their sins, and added that he did not think it possible that the clergy themselves could believe this. He begged the bishop, as he valued his own soul, to seek to turn the minds of the people from dependence on man to Christ Jesus, who alone can forgive sins, warning him that otherwise he would incur a weight of condemnation too heavy to bear in the great day of account.

He added that it had seemed to him that, if the Almighty had one vial of His wrath more powerful than another, it would be poured out upon those who thus deceived the people. The bishop manifested much confusion, and closed his eyes as if unable to meet those of his guest; but after a pause he replied that he thought it unchristian and indecorous for a stranger thus to address one like himself, "of much experience in the Church of God." Shillitoe answered that he had spoken out of love to his soul; and as the Friends rose to leave, the bishop clasped his hand, and whilst holding it remarked that he thought he might say he was thankful for the visit. About a year later the bishop died. Shillitoe was deeply pained to find that when he appealed to the people in reference to that law of God in the heart which told them what they must do and what they must

leave undone, the answer was that they must not think for themselves, but must do what the priests bade.

In allusion to a little time for waiting on the Lord, and for exhortation or prayer in the family of a Friend, Shillitoe says:—“May I never be the means of putting by opportunities like these, where way is made for them by Him whose presence alone animates and quickens the mind to every good word and work.” When noticing the public-houses at Watergrass Hill, and when passing through Furtmagh, he thought that on a future day he would have to visit those places, but when going through two other towns he had no such feeling. He writes of the need “to keep the eye single and the dependence simple on the sure Guide, in order to be rightly qualified to know the proper stopping-places.” At one drinking-house in Limerick, where he found a large company, some respectably dressed and others clad in rags, closely packed together, the calming influence of the love of God was soon spread over them, and all were hushed into great stillness. He addressed them on the utter insufficiency of trust in man as a means of salvation. As he left them many expressed their satisfaction with what they had heard. Sometimes the reception given in public-houses

was a very abusive one, but even then he often found there was some opportunity for speaking to the rough audience.

The prospect of visiting such houses in Dublin pressed heavily on his heart, and he writes:—"Oh, the need of enduring these emptying seasons in order to be intrusted with the new wine of the kingdom to hand out to others pure and unadulterated." One of these numerous visits was made very early in the morning. The drinking-room, with broken window-frames and smashed glass, was a kind of cellar in which several bare-footed girls were dancing to the sound of a violin. He passed on to the room set apart for the owners of the house, which seemed to be chiefly under the management of a woman. She was a mother, and her heart was touched when he pleaded with her on behalf of the young girls below. Returning to the cellar he requested the fiddler to stop playing, and the dancers to cease dancing and take seats, which they did with one accord. Overcome with revelling and drunkenness some girls lay on a bench, others on tables, hardly able to raise their heads; in another part of the room men and women were drinking. Deep distress was on the faces of some of the young women as they listened to the words Shillitoe addressed to them, and some

spoke to him of their gratitude, and their hope that his messnge would not have been given in vain. Whilst he was speaking some persons had entered the room, but as they did so a feeling of awe caused them to seat themselves as noiselessly as possible. About 600 visits of this kind were paid in Dublin.

CHAPTER II.

“One life divine
Through all the branches of the mystical vine
Flows ever.”

—ARCHBISHOP TRENCH.

CHAPTER II.

"He that is thoroughly willing to do it, shall certainly know what the will of God is."—JOHN WESLEY.

IN the autumn of 1812 Thomas Shillitoe heard that a lady Friend of Bristol was desiring to visit in their own homes the colliers in the suburb of Kingswood, as well as a class of lawless men known as the "Gang," many of whom were wont to find their way to the prison and gallows of Gloucester. Although this was an undertaking he shrank from, Shillitoe felt it right to offer his aid in this service. The Friends met with many cases of extreme destitution, and their sympathy called forth much gratitude. The meetings which they held were frequently crowded to excess, and the quietness of the rough congregations was often remarkable.

One day, when passing over a common, they saw two men catching birds, a pastime pursued by some of the gang as a cloak to the deeds which made them a terror to the neighbourhood. As the Friends drew near the men made off, but were

followed by Shillitoe, who requested one of them to give them his company in a cottage into which the other fugitive had entered. When they asked for him at the door the woman who lived there said he had gone out again, but when reproved for her falsehood she called out "Richard, come down stairs!" No response was given, and Thomas Shillitoe, thinking it right to insist on an interview, went himself to the foot of the stairs and said in a loud voice, "Richard, come down, or I must go up and fetch thee!" As there was still no reply, he put his threat into execution, and found crouching behind a bed a large-boned strong man, in whose hands he would have been quite powerless. Nevertheless he took him by the collar and bade him go down before him, which he did, and then quietly took his seat in the chimney-corner. He listened attentively to plain and fitting words of counsel, and took leave of his visitors in so grateful a manner as to give the belief that real good had been done.

In the following spring Shillitoe paid a series of visits to the widows and orphans of seventeen men, who had been hanged at York for destroying machinery and other acts of violence, including the murder of a master manufacturer. It was a service in which he knew what it was to go down into

suffering with the sufferers. He writes :—“ It was eminently manifested that He who puts forth, as He is simply relied on, prepares the way. The extraordinary manner in which the opportunities were overshadowed with the Divine goodness was a renewed cause for encouragement.”

It was in the same year that Thomas Shillitoe believed that the Lord set before him the duty of seeking for a religious interview with the Prince Regent, afterwards George IV. As endeavours for personal intercourse failed, he wrote an address to the prince, and waited for a suitable occasion to deliver it himself. This he found by following the prince to Brighton, and presenting the document as the royal party were starting for a ride on the downs. A magnificent banquet had been announced for the following day in honour of a royal birthday, and much disappointment was felt by the gay company at Brighton when, suddenly and without any explanation, the festivities were countermanded. Full of thanksgiving and praise was the heart of Thomas Shillitoe when he left Brighton, and walked the thirty miles to Reigate, “ scarcely feeling the ground.”

At the age of sixty-seven, Shillitoe began an extensive journey through parts of Holland, Norway, Germany, and the South of France, a service to

which he had long felt himself called. He writes :—

“ When I took a view of the accumulated difficulties that I must expect in the prosecution of the work before me, my soul was humbled and bowed within me. . . . But Divine goodness appeared for my help, with the animating assurance that if I remained willing to be like a cork on the mighty ocean of service which my great Master should require of me, in the storm, and in the calm, willing to be wafted hither and thither as the Spirit of the Lord God should blow upon me, He would care for me every day and every way, so there should be no lack of strength to encounter all my difficulties. Here my difficulties vanished.”

Thus did he enter on very formidable service. It was his aim to seek the promptings of the Holy Spirit as to the way he should go, those who should accompany him in travelling, the individuals and companies he should visit, as well as the messages he should deliver; and the event amply proved that such guidance was not sought in vain, but that he was continually brought into contact with those whose hearts were prepared to receive him as the ambassador of Christ, and also with people who were just the right persons to be his interpreters, and to help him in other ways. Before leaving

England, he parted with the cottage near Hitchin, which possessed many charms for him, and which he had toiled to make a comfortable home for the declining years of his wife and himself. His wife he left under the care of one of their daughters. He writes :—“The Yearly Meeting being over, I took leave of my dear wife, now in her seventy-fifth year, the most trying parting we ever experienced.”

It was at Amsterdam that he began his labours, and having found on the meeting-house premises some chests containing books in the Dutch language in sheets, he had “Barclay’s Apology,” and “Sewel’s History of Friends,” bound for distribution. His first visit was to a bookseller and his sister, of which he says :—“Although we were not able ourselves to exchange a sentiment on religious subjects, that nearness of affection and union of spirit, which the true disciples of the great Master experience the world over, was felt by me with these my new acquaintance. They requested I might be told our thus meeting was a great treat to their minds.” The bookseller put his hand on his heart and said, “Although we cannot by words converse, I find we can converse here.” Shillitoe found that there was much on his heart to communicate to them through his interpreter.

After leaving Amsterdam, he thought the fear of man had hindered him from speaking faithfully to the popular pastor of a congregation there, and on hearing that he was going to preach at Rotterdam, he sought an interview with him, which he thus describes :—

“ I endeavoured to lay before him the extremely responsible situation he had placed himself in amongst the people, by his declaring he believed he was called of God to fill the office of a minister of Jesus Christ, and the need there was for him to give proof of it by walking circumspectly before men, not trying to please the ears of his hearers, but speaking the truth to them as it is in Jesus from the very bottom of his heart.”

The pastor fully admitted the truthfulness of what had been laid before him, but added that it would not be possible for him to follow such counsel if his services were to be retained by his congregation.

Shillitoe had a frank and cheerful manner which must have been helpful in his intercourse with strangers. We find a good Dutchwoman writing him a letter, in which she expresses her thankfulness that he had come to her country, and her hope that his “ discoursing with so much freeness and openness ” would disabuse her people of the

notion that "Quakers are stiff," and of the idea that any need be fanatics because of their desire to be always looking for that influence and guidance of the Spirit of God, which is blessedly vouchsafed to the seeking trustful heart.

In a private interview, obtained by exceeding perseverance, with a gentleman who had a very high standing in the religious circle at Rotterdam, Shillitoe had to speak faithful words of warning, reminding him that nominal membership in the militant Church would not entitle him to a place in the Church triumphant. He also advised him to be on his guard against too great a multiplicity of engagements, however anxious he was to promote the welfare of his fellow-creatures; believing that many laid waste the usefulness for which the Lord designed them, by undertaking more than they were well able to do.

In Altona and Hamburg he was sorely grieved at the manner in which Sunday was spent, with shops open, carpenters and painters at work in the streets, hay being brought into the town, and evening entertainments of music and dancing held at disreputable houses. He believed it right to draw up an address to the inhabitants, and another to the senators and magistrates, both of which he sent to England to be printed. His friends there

returned him a bountiful supply of copies of the addresses, which he widely distributed. Then followed an arrest. He was taken to the guard-house and locked up until the following day, in a comfortless place, with a muddy stone floor. "Endeavouring to know my mind stayed upon God," he writes :—

"I was preserved quiet, frequently experiencing the arising up of the assurance from the Almighty power that not a hair of my head would they be suffered to hurt. It now became my song of rejoicing that through co-operating with the Divine help afforded I had unabatingly exerted my utmost, and accomplished the work assigned. It was only my body they had in bondage, my spirit was free and far removed from the molestation of the 'police-master.'"

To that functionary's court the prisoner was taken on the following morning, to be kept waiting whilst the "police-master," much perplexed with the case, paced backwards and forwards in his office muttering to himself, and finally saying aloud that, out of respect to those with whom Shillitoe had associated in Altona, he should release him.

It was about this time that Shillitoe met with a young count whom he had previously known, and makes a beautiful allusion to his "sweet, tender

frame of mind, comparable to wax before the fire ready to receive every impression of the Divine will concerning himself."

Norway now lay before Thomas Shillitoe. He was suffering much from hoarseness and pain in the chest, and wished to go there by sea, shrinking from a solitary overland journey. Copenhagen was, however, brought so forcibly before his mind that he could rightly take no other route than one which would pass through that city. He believed that formidable service awaited him, but was comforted by the conviction that if, as at other times, he fully resigned himself into the Lord's hands, he would be carried through the work that lay before him, and helped as remarkably as he had been in the past. In this dependent state of mind he realised that he must endeavour to obtain a personal interview with the King of Denmark. In his journal of this date we find the following words, characteristic of the sensitive, apprehensive temperament of the man to whom, nevertheless, the doing of his Lord's will was as meat and drink:—"A hope was felt that my proceeding thus far was under best direction, yet fear was uppermost lest discouragement should prevent me from doing my very utmost in fulfilling all the Divine will concerning me." The visit to the King was a satis-

factory one, in which Shillitoe faithfully laid before him some matters relative to the true welfare of his subjects. The Queen gave a kindly reception to Shillitoe, as did the Princess Royal, whom he describes as "a young woman of amiable countenance, in plain and simple attire." When he acknowledged her kindness in giving him a patient hearing, she said she felt obliged for the counsel he had given her, and at parting shook hands with him. The Queen also expressed her gratitude, and when offered some books explanatory of the principles of Friends, said she should be truly thankful for them.

One of the ladies in attendance told him that the remarks he had addressed to herself were as applicable to her state as if he had long been acquainted with it, and said that such seasonable words would long be remembered.

When a few years later Shillitoe was again at Copenhagen, a nobleman who had shown him kindness remarked, in allusion to this lady, that they had had a great loss in the death of one of his old friends, and spoke of the depth of her religious experience, and her patience under intense bodily suffering. "She often spoke of you," he added, "and she became more and more one in sentiment with you in matters of religion. Her loss is greatly felt by all about the court."

Small of stature, unpretending in appearance, again and again Thomas Shillitoe was recognised by strangers as the ambassador of the King of kings. A Danish gentleman when offering him a list of names remarked, "But there is that about you that will be a sufficient introduction for you anywhere." Thus we find a young officer in the army whom he meets in travelling laying himself out for his accommodation ; an aged clergyman holding out both hands to welcome him, whilst feelingly invoking God's blessing on him and his labours ; a Roman Catholic abbé asking for his prayers ; a Lutheran preacher interpreting admirably for him ; and a German gentleman, high in office, writing :—"I could not do otherwise than love thee, believing thee to be an evangelical Christian and a faithful servant of the Lord. I shall always think of thee with love."

Rough as had been the journey to Copenhagen, causing "sore bones and bruised flesh," that to Christiania was still more trying, for the only guide he could get was, he says, "as wicked, dark a spirit as I ever before had met with." Intense cold, deep snow, and dense fogs were to be encountered, whilst broken harness and lost linchpins caused delay ; the place of the latter was filled by a stick cut out of the hedge by the driver, who then coolly

drove on along the rugged mountain road, which lay close beside dangerous precipices and deep waters. Weary, wet and hungry, he arrived at Wassguard, but a good fire was the only comfort the house afforded, although he did his best to swallow the supper and breakfast, which he thought must share in the filth that was manifest to sight and scent.

It was near the end of 1821 that Shillitoe reached Christiania, where he spent the remainder of the winter. He writes of New Year's Day as a memorable time to himself and to the family with whom he was staying :—“ Some portions of my visit to Copenhagen came before my mind, accompanied with a sense of the savour of good I was favoured to experience during my religious engagements there, which produced a holy quiet in me; and on my taking my seat with the family at the dinner-table, this feeling appeared to circulate as from one to another, until most present in degree manifested a partaking of it, so that little conversation took place, and we separated reluctantly.”

In one of the meetings for worship Shillitoe was led to speak most pointedly to the spiritual condition of some one present. His faith was much tried afterwards, as he was ready to fear that he had made some sad mistake. But he was told

by a Friend that the message he had so faithfully delivered was as applicable to a person who had attended the meeting, as if Thomas Shillitoe had well known his history. "I thought," he says,— "I never more sensibly felt than during my labours that afternoon the necessity for the instrument becoming like a clear tube, through which liquor passes from one vessel to another."

Elsewhere he alludes to the efforts of Satan to lay waste the labours of the ministers of the Gospel of Christ, and to frustrate the service the Lord had designed for them, sometimes by causing them through discouragement to leave undone the things they ought to have done, and at other times by tempting them to go before the Good Shepherd, and enter into service not required at their hands, or before the right time had come for its accomplishment.

Shillitoe had an interview at Christiania with an aged man, Hans Neilson Houghe, the founder of the Norwegian sect called the Saints. From the story he told of the way in which he was awakened to a sense of true spiritual life, Shillitoe believed that had he but faithfully gone forward in the path of the just, as he had begun, he would have become an instrument in God's hand for arousing the people of Norway from the state of indifference into which,

to a great extent, professors and profane were alike sunk. Neilson Hough had read "Barclay's Apology for the true Christian Divinity," and spoke particularly of the chapter on the Ministry of the Gospel. He said that when he first preached much power had attended his ministry, and a great number of people were convinced at different towns. Several of those who had united with him in religious fellowship, both men and women, became ministers, and meetings were opened in different places. After a while he was imprisoned by a mandate from the government, and his followers were threatened with a like fate unless they would give up their meetings and forbear preaching. Their founder advised them to secure their safety. His own confinement was a long one, and he was heavily fined, although he promised that on his release his followers and himself would again attend the Lutheran Church, and duly conform to all rites and ceremonies. At the time of Shillitoe's visit to him he was assisting the Lutheran priest of the parish in which he resided. Shillitoe spoke very plainly to poor Neilson on the sad consequences of rendering only a partial obedience to the Lord, reminding him that by stopping short of a faithful fulfilment of all the Lord's will the purposes of Heaven respecting him were frustrated. . . . His countenance showed his conviction

of the truth of their words. Neilson Houghe took an affectionate leave of his faithful visitor who could but mourn over his sorrowful history.

We see already that the taking of the yoke of Christ was a practical reality to Thomas Shillitoe. Was it bondage? Truly no. In the words of a late writer, J. Tindall Harris,—“To be bound to Christ, orbited in Him in faith and love, is to be in the true freedom, bound with perfect *will* and desire and love to Him, as the earth is bound to the sun by the unseen power of gravitation.”

CHAPTER III.

"‘Teach me to do Thy will, O God.’ A whole life can be built up on that one vertebral column, and then when all is over, ‘he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.’”

—DRUMMOND.

CHAPTER III.

“When the Lord God and His Son Jesus Christ sent me forth into the world to preach His everlasting Gospel and Kingdom, I was glad that I was commanded to turn people to that inward light, spirit, and grace by which all might know their salvation and their way to God. . . . I showed them the true worship which Christ had set up . . . turning them from darkness to the true light, that by it they might see themselves, their sins, and Christ their Saviour, that believing in Him, they might be saved from their sins.”

—GEORGE FOX.

WHILST at Christiania, Shillitoe was invited to dine with the governor at the palace. In the earlier part of the day he attended the usual mid-week meeting of Friends, where he says, “I was favoured to receive a portion of that bread which comes down from God, the crumbs of which are more availing for our help and preservation in the way of righteousness than anything we receive through instrumental means.” The governor and the countess, his wife, give him a cordial reception. Some of the chief officers of state were able to converse with him in English, and others regretted

their inability to do so; one in particular, who said, as he put his hand on his heart, " Yet I feel we can understand each other here."

A professor of theology came one day to the apartments occupied by Shillitoe, in order to see his friend Enoch Jacobson. During this call Shillitoe was quietly walking up and down the room under a good deal of exercise of mind. Before the caller left the house he spoke to Enoch Jacobson with surprise of the feelings of good which he had experienced whilst in Thomas Shillitoe's company, although they had been unable to converse.

Shillitoe was struck with the beauty of the mountains as they rose one above the other to the clouds, whilst billows rolled in upon the shore, and land and sea fowl revelled in the encircling sunshine in full enjoyment of their Creator's gifts. He contrasts their joy with the state of sinful man, but adds, " Joy and gladness is the predominating experience of the upright in heart."

Whilst at Christiania a most unlooked-for trial befell him. His dear Norwegian friend and interpreter, who had been a true yoke-fellow, became so much depressed that he seemed spiritually deaf and dumb. As Shillitoe knew of no one who could take his place, he was much perplexed; and just at this time a gentleman called to take Thomas

Shillitoe to the house of one of the deans, whom he had a concern to visit. Although it seemed like passing through mountains of discouragement, this visit was accomplished satisfactorily.

“ Thus it happened,” he writes, “ that as I was brought into a willingness to become like the simple tube, my embarrassments of mind respecting my interpreter’s disqualifications to lend me his aid vanished ; and, whilst endeavouring faithfully to relieve my mind of what came before me, I thought I was favoured with an evidence that my interpreter was helped to do his part of the work faithfully.”

In allusion to the latter, he afterwards wrote :—

“ I mourned in secret on his account, as well as my own, from the renewed evidence given me that his mind had been in a very particular manner preciously visited by the Lord, his God. The thought of sitting in meetings under exercise of mind for service, and no way of relief, would indeed be trying. I turned out of town, and sought a retired place, where, in vocal accents, I might pour out my complaint, for I felt assured that the Lord, and He alone, was sufficient to sustain and help me.”

Trouble of mind, lack of sleep, weakness of body inducing faintness, had brought him very low ; but soon his interpreter’s mind brightened a little, and the work was resumed.

Before leaving Christiania, Shillitoe had a meeting with the convicts in the castle of Aggerhaus, when about 160 prisoners were present, with their keepers and some military officers, whilst a large company of people gathered around the open window. After Baron Weddel, the governor of the castle, had addressed the prisoners, there was a time of silence, when the minds of those present were evidently influenced by the solemnity brooding over them. Then Shillitoe delivered the message on his heart for the prisoners; and the remark was afterwards made that they had never been so seriously impressed before.

During an interview with the Bishop of Christiania, Shillitoe exhorted him to petition the King in reference to the right observance of Sunday, urging him not to fear offending the great, but to remember whose ambassador he had declared himself to be.

“Our minds were favoured with a precious covering of good, and the bishop closed the subject by saying, ‘I can and I will do it.’ I replied, laying my hands on his shoulders, ‘I now feel that load which I have so long travelled under taken off my shoulders and placed, where it properly belongs, on thine,’ beseeching him to be very careful he got quit of it again in a right way.”

When on his voyage to Stavangar, Shillitoe landed on an island, where the family of the captain of the boat resided, and found "a more beautiful retreat from the hurries of the world" than he had ever before met with: "beautifully wooded and watered, abounding with birds of various kinds, whose shrill and melodious voices echoed in the air; the ground appearing so fertile as not to require much labour to produce food for the inhabitants and their cattle." The final landing-place was near Ogna, and rough indeed was the journey between that place and Stavangar. During the last stage the attendants, who were to take back the horses, were two women, whom Shillitoe prevailed on to ride at times in the little carriage, whilst he, weary though he was, and the young man who accompanied him, walked for a while. Great was the gratitude of the poor women for this unlooked-for Christian chivalry.

Shillitoe had not been long at Stavangar before he received a visit from the son of a merchant, who said he felt it his duty to offer his services as interpreter in the calls made on the clergy and members of the government. After some agreeable interviews of this kind, Thomas Shillitoe asked if he would also be his interpreter in the Friends' meeting, but as this request seemed to try him

much, did not press it. On the morning of the following Sunday, however, he called at Thomas Shillitoe's lodgings, accompanied him to the meeting and admirably interpreted for him. In the afternoon meeting, the parish clergyman and some members of the chief families of the place were present. When the young interpreter saw this he became much agitated, and begged to be freed from his engagement. Shillitoe was also told that some who were present knew a little of the English language. Although it was a trial of faith to address a large assembly in what would be an unknown tongue to most present, he saw that this would be the right course to take. When he was speaking much feeling was manifested, the tears streaming down some faces; whilst one woman, who did not know a word of English, wept aloud.

Not long afterwards, when attending the mid-week meeting at Pyrmont, he asked if any one present understood English and would interpret for him, but had no reply. Under these circumstances, he believed that the best course was to give his message in English. After he had resumed his seat, one of the members of the meeting rose up and spoke in the German language; and although Shillitoe could not understand what was

said, he thought that it corroborated what had been expressed by himself. After meeting he was told by an English Friend that it was a repetition of a part of his communication. When the German speaker was asked if he had been able to follow Thomas Shillitoe's words, he replied that he had not; but added, as he laid his hand on his heart, that he had felt the import of them there. During his prolonged stay at Pyrmont, Shillitoe was glad to engage in gardening, and found his daily labour "no little relief to his mind."

Earnest were his prayers that he might leave no service unaccomplished which he ought to perform before returning home, whilst at the same time he desired to go to no place as a mere matter of course. Thus, in reference to two meetings in the South of France, he writes :—

"However my passing them by may be a solitary instance, my way in this respect continued quite closed up. I find it will not do for me, unbidden, to go in the same track which others have gone in before me."

In the spring of 1823, after an absence of a year and ten months, he returned home; and in the summer of the following year started again for continental labour; but not before he had, in company with Peter Bedford, presented George IV. with an

address on the subject of some of the flagrant evils prevailing in the royal dominion in Hanover. This memorial he handed to the King as he was driving in his pony-chaise on the long walk at Windsor ; and afterwards spoke a few earnest words to him, receiving the response, “ I thank you.”

At the close of the Friends’ Yearly Meeting, as he walked to his London lodgings he experienced renewed desires “to be preserved cleaving in spirit to the Lord, in order to be favoured to know His all-supporting arm of power to bear me up through every trial that may await the faithful discharge of duty, unaccompanied by any sympathising brother.” Whilst thus pensively pondering his future way, he was overtaken by his friend Thomas Christy, who offered to be his companion as far as Minden.

At Altona, Shillitoe called on the police superintendent, who, on his former visit, had committed him to prison, in order to give him “a hand of love.” From the chief magistrate he had the cheering news that moral improvement was making great progress in that city, for the welfare of which he had been deeply concerned ; but the state of Burgh was very different, and led him to seek an interview with an aged senator, who had much influence. At the last hour his interpreter failed him ; and on reaching the senator’s house he could not make

himself understood. He feared that whilst seeking for a new interpreter the senator might give him the slip ; but before he had gone many yards from the house he met one of the chief police officers, who had been very courteous to him at the Stadt House, and who spoke English well. He quaintly says, “ I thought I felt that in my own mind which would warrant me to stop him, and tell him I arrested him into my service, which I accordingly did.” Naturally the policeman was taken by surprise at this reverse of the usual order of things ; and, having at first no idea of what he should have to translate, manifested some unwillingness to yield to his “ arrest,” but soon readily consented to give the needed help. Shillitoe’s visit to Minden was much appreciated ; and when he bade farewell to the Friends there, many tears were shed and words of deep heartfelt sorrow spoken.

When looking forward to an interview with the King of Prussia at no distant time, Shillitoe writes :—“ Earnest were my secret cries to the Almighty, when my mind was free from exercise on other religious accounts, that I might be directed by my Divine Master.” And the assurance was given him that as he attended to present duty, the business of the morrow might be left to the morrow, and that as was the day, so would be the counsel

and the help for the fulfilling the service of the day. In order to obtain an introduction to the King he called on a nobleman, and says :—

“ I thought it was evident that the Countess had prepared his mind for the business we were come upon, as the Count received us with open arms. We sat down together under feelings of much solemnity. I gave him my certificates to read, and then laid before him my prospect of duty to attempt an interview with the King and his son, the Crown Prince, telling the Count I must throw myself upon him for help, and requesting his utmost exertions.”

The Crown Prince was first visited, and gave Shillitoe a kindly reception, listening with earnest attention to the words addressed to him in reference to his own spiritual welfare and the welfare of the nation. As they bade each other farewell the Prince grasped the hand of the aged Friend, and said with emotion, “ Do not forget me, do not forget me.”

The interview with the King took place in the palace-gardens of Charlottenburg. Shillitoe writes :—“ I was favoured with strength to crave of the Lord my God (who is all-sufficient to fill the vessel of the mind in the needful time) to empty me as He saw best for me, and best for the

honour of His cause." During the visit he presented the King a petition from a Friend of Minden, who was suffering because of his refusal to render military service. The King promised that the Friend should be released, and remarked that conscience was a sacred thing. At the conclusion of his address to the King Thomas Shillitoe said, that it was his belief that "if the King did all in his power towards promoting true religion and righteousness amongst his subjects, it would do more towards his being preserved in a peaceable and quiet possession of his dominions than all the fortifications or armies he could possibly raise." "I believe so myself," was the Monarch's reply. The retrospect of this visit filled Shillitoe's heart with reverent gratitude.

From Prince Wigenstein, who was in attendance on the King, he obtained a letter authorising him to visit the State prison at Spandau. He went there, accompanied by Thomas Christy and an interpreter. The governor of the prison, in an agitated manner, tried hard to dissuade him from attempting to see all the prisoners, some of whom, he said, were so desperately wicked that it would be dangerous to venture amongst them. But Shillitoe felt that he could rightly do no other than pay a general visit to the prisons, if such a course were

possible. He was first taken to the women's ward, where he found a company of about seventy, who gathered around the flight of steps on which the chaplain had placed the Friends and the young interpreter. Quietness soon reigned,—such a quietness as he had rarely known to be exceeded,—and the meeting was the most heart-melting he had ever known. He next asked to be taken to the men, but the governor strongly objected, evidently in fear of what might be the consequence of the men, being all collected together; but at length he arranged that Thomas Shillitoe should meet with them in the chapel in the afternoon. It afterwards appeared that the reason of this delay was to give time to separate many of the more formidable criminals, in order that they should not go with their companions to the chapel, where, although a good meeting was held, Shillitoe did not feel that he had laid down all his burden. When he learnt that he had not seen all the men, he thought it right to obtain the requisite authority for a second visit, and a meeting with the whole number. Meanwhile he was told of sundry past outbreaks of violence at Spandau, in one of which a governor had been murdered. To a man of a nervous temperament, the prospect of this fresh service in the prison, with its attendant responsibilities, must have been

no light trial. When about to go there, he emptied his pockets of purse, pocket-book, watch, and pen-knife; then, realising that such an act showed a lack of full and entire trust in God's arm of power, and was, therefore, weakening him for the work which lay before him, he returned to his chamber and replaced them all.

On arriving at Spandau he was told that the former visit there had astonished the people of the town, who wondered at the Christian love which could lead men to leave their families, and cross the sea, and remember the poor prisoners, who had seemed to be forgotten by everybody. The chaplain gave the Friends a kind welcome; but when the fresh mandate was handed to the governor, he seemed electrified as he read its peremptory contents. But, finally, he gave orders for all the male prisoners to be assembled in the yard, on entering which Thomas Shillitoe saw some 300 or 400 men, with many forbidding faces amongst them. Notwithstanding which he says:—

“ I cannot call to remembrance a time when I have found a more open door to receive what was communicated. The countenances of many of the prisoners appeared sorrowfully affected and bathed in tears; and the quiet manner in which they behaved during the whole of the meeting was a

striking proof of the sufficiency of the power of God, now, as formerly, to control and bring into subjection the evil power in men, that thus He alone whose right it is to reign may have the dominion."

The manner in which the men pressed his hand at parting showed their gratitude. Before he left the premises the chaplain came to tell him that the prisoners had asked him to express, in the name of the whole of their number, their thankfulness for the visit, and that many of them could say that the words which had been spoken to them had reached their very hearts, and they hoped would produce good fruit. The governor seemed at a loss to know how to manifest his gratitude to the Friends.

Before leaving Berlin, as Thomas Shillitoe had often been much concerned on behalf of some serious persons about the court, he wrote a brief address to them. One paragraph runs thus :—

"I have in my solitary moments earnestly craved that all who may be placed about the person of the King and every branch of his family, and others who may be placed in affluent situations in life, whose lips may have been mercifully touched as with a live coal from off the altar, may keep humble, little,

and low in their own estimation ; for this will be the way, and the only way, for such to experience the Lord to teach them His ways ; and by keeping in meekness and true fear before Him, know Him to direct their steps.”

CHAPTER IV.

“ For toil there comes the crownèd rest,
Instead of burdens, eagles’ wings ;
And I, even I, this lifelong thirst
Shall quench at everlasting springs.

“ God lives ! Who says that I must die ?
I cannot while Jehovah liveth ;
Christ lives ! I cannot die but live ;
He life to me for ever giveth.”

—BONAR.

CHAPTER IV.

“ And while we do Thy blessed will,
We bear our heaven about us still.”

THOMAS SHILLITOE keenly felt the parting from his friend Thomas Christy. From Berlin he went to Copenhagen, where he again had much intercourse with members of the royal family and household. In the route from Berlin to St. Petersburg he distinctly traced the guiding hand of the Lord. He had wished to sail from Elsinore as speedily as possible, in order to reach St. Petersburg before the equinoctial gales set in, and dreaded the long delay involved by service at Copenhagen; but these fears were soothed by the assurance given him that, if he simply attended to the duties set before him, He who called him to the work could command the winds and waves, and waft him safely over to the Russian shore. On his arrival at St. Petersburg, he had no clear feeling as to what might be the work which lay before him; and with his usual simplicity he records how, during an afternoon ramble, whilst pondering the seem-

ingly useless manner in which he was spending his time, he was tempted to fish for a cause for self-condemnation, but was enabled to realise that as long as the cloud rested on the Tabernacle it would be unsafe to leave the tent.

About this time he alludes in his journal to "the efficacious working of the love of God on the mind of man when fully co-operated with," and adds, "as the judgment becomes thus awakened and a willingness is brought about to bow to the holy influence of this love, fruits corresponding with its Divine nature will in due time manifest themselves."

As a stranger in St. Petersburg, who seemed to be engaged in no business, Shillitoe soon found that he was becoming an object of suspicion to the police, and that there were rumours in the city that, in travels all over Europe, he had been freely bestowing money, having, it was presumed, some revolutionary project in view. He was greatly tried when these reports reached him, and became fearful of sudden arrest and possible banishment to Siberia; but one morning, whilst out on his usual ramble, and when almost overwhelmed with discouragement, he was comforted by the inward assurance that, if he steadfastly maintained his integrity, his Father in Heaven

would not fail to care for him in every way; and this led to fresh yearnings to follow his Lord whithersoever He might lead, even were it to prison or to death. He was very careful to take his walks in the most public parts of the city, and to avoid anything in conduct that might give possible ground for suspicion. The intense cold was very trying to his constitution; but in his journal he records how, when coming in one evening to his comfortable room, supper, and bed, his heart overflowed with gratitude, whilst he prayed to be kept in the lowly valley of humility, "That so all I am and all I may be, through Thy Divine help, may be to Thy honour." Although but little actual visible service was falling to his lot, he did not doubt that St. Petersburg was his right residence for the time.

On the morning of the 19th of November, 1824, when he started for his usual walk, he found to his astonishment that his lodgings were surrounded by water, and going back to the house he told his landlady that they were living on an island. This was the beginning of an inundation of extraordinary magnitude, which led to great loss of life and property. The water rose to the ceiling of the ground-floor of the house in which Shillitoe lodged; and from eleven o'clock until four an

awful stillness prevailed. The landlady feared that the whole city might be so flooded that none would escape with their lives, but he believed that this was "a visitation in mercy from Almighty God;" and, as from the windows he watched the rise of the waters, his mind was kept in quietness and free from fear. On the following day the flood had left the streets, and as he explored them he felt that a full description of the dreadful consequences of the inundation would be beyond the power of man.

During this terrible time, Shillitoe began to feel the loosening of his bonds. He thought it his duty to write a general address to the inhabitants of the city in reference to this solemn visitation; but who would dare translate or print it he knew not. He also believed it right to prepare an address to the English Protestants in Russia; and as he could not get it printed, he made a few copies for the pastors of the English congregations, who received them cordially, and proposed reading the document at the conclusion of their usual service.

The way now opened for an interview with the Emperor Alexander. Shillitoe was conducted to one of the private rooms of the palace, where soon he was joined by the Emperor, whom he describes as being tall and of a placid countenance, with a

dress so devoid of ornament as to give rise to the question, "Am I now in company with the Emperor?" "Yes," was his reply, as he took hold of the hand of his visitor and placed him on a sofa beside him. He then inquired for Stephen Grellet and William Allen, and spoke in warm terms of his sincere regard for them. Shillitoe, after speaking to him in reference to the notorious abuse of the Sunday in St. Petersburg, told him of the address he had written to the inhabitants, saying that he thought it right to give it in charge to him as the Father of his people. This address the Emperor willingly received, and then Shillitoe unburdened his heart on other subjects. He says:—

"I never witnessed my mind more unshackled, or felt more freedom from all restraint and more at liberty to unbosom my whole soul, than I did on this occasion to the pious Emperor, on every subject as it arose in my mind to lay before him, both as it respected himself as Sovereign, and the subjects he was permitted to rule over; feeling more as if I were sitting by the side of a servant dependent on me than by the side of so great a monarch."

The Emperor afterwards told Shillitoe that from early life he had often felt something within which

at times gave him clearly to see that he stood in need of a further knowledge of Divine things, but he had not known where to look for availing help until he became acquainted with some members of the Society of Friends.

"This," he added, "I have since considered to be the greatest of all the outward blessings the Almighty has bestowed upon me, because hereby I became fully satisfied that that which had thus followed me, though I was ignorant of what it meant, was that same Divine Power, inwardly revealed, which your religious Society has from its commencement professed to be actuated by in the daily walk through life. My attention became turned with increasing earnestness to seek after more of an acquaintance with it in my own soul, and I bless the Lord that He thus continues to condescend to send His true Gospel ministers to keep me in remembrance of this day of His merciful awakening to my soul."

The Emperor then spoke freely of the suffering he sometimes passed through when seeking to know what step to take.

"I see," he said, "things necessary for me to do, and things necessary for me to refuse complying with although expected from me. You have counselled me to an unreserved and well-

timed obedience in all things. I clearly see it to be my duty, and this is what I want to be more brought into the experience of. But when I try for it doubts come into my mind and discouragement prevails, for, although they call me an absolute monarch, it is but little power I have."

How timely must have been this visit. When Shillitoe made a move to go, the Emperor requested that they might have a quiet sitting together for waiting on the Lord; and afterwards, warmly grasping his hand, said that this must not be considered a parting opportunity.

"On being about to retire," writes Shillitoe, "I observed the Emperor turned himself from me, as I fully believe in order to give vent to his tears of gratitude to the Almighty, who in mercy had been pleased to favour us together with the precious overshadowing influence of His good presence, an evidence of which I never remember to have been more sensible of."

When, on his next call, Shillitoe told the Emperor that there were some important, but delicate, matters, that he dared do no other than touch on, the reply was "Why hesitate? I am open to receive all you may have to say." Shillitoe adds—

"The way being thus mercifully made plain to

the humbling of my very soul, in deep prostration before the Lord, I endeavoured, in as concise and impressive a manner as possible, to keep under my exercise ; and, as subjects were one after another brought before my mental view, strength was mercifully given me faithfully to acquit myself."

These subjects included the condition of the serfs and of the prisoners, the barbarous punishment of the knout, and also the difficulties by which the Bible Society in St. Petersburg was surrounded, owing mainly to the opposition of the Greek Metropolitan. The Emperor expressed much sympathy with Shillitoe's views on these matters, and when afterwards his visitor was constrained to kneel down in prayer, he knelt by his side ; and then, after a little time of silence, they took a heart-tendering farewell.

Often did Shillitoe recur, with exceeding comfort, to the precious overshadowings of Divine love, of which he was very conscious during these interviews. His last service in the city was a leave-taking call on Prince Alexander Galitzin.

" We parted," he says, " under feelings of sincere regard as brethren, however differing in name and external performance as to religion, yet, I trust, earnestly desiring that, in our daily intercourse with men, we might each be giving proof that our

chief care was to be found fulfilling the Divine command, ‘Walk before Me, and be thou perfect.’”

To that man, with his highly strung temperament, now more than seventy years of age, how great must have been the strain of that long winter sojourn in St. Petersburg. He had never retired to rest with any feeling of certainty that he should be unmolested till morning. But God was his refuge, and—

“ When He giveth work to do,
The bruised reed is amply tough
To pierce the shield of error thro’.”

Daniel Wheeler was his companion on the overland homeward journey, and many were the hardships they underwent. Whilst pursuing it some news reached him which was, he says, “like marrow to his bones.” It was in reference to the great improvement that had taken place in the conduct of the prisoners of Spandau since his visit to them. He also had a very grateful letter from one of the aide-de-camps of the King of Prussia, in which he says, “ You have heaped upon us the blessing of love.”

He reached home in the spring of 1825, and it is not surprising that when the arduous journey, with its daily excitement, was over, he should suffer from much exhaustion; but soon hearing of

the critical state of health of his children at Sheffield, he went there by coach, although he seemed unfit to leave his room. He writes about this time of how essential he found it to endeavour “to keep in the lowly valley, lest the dew which I was favoured to witness resting on my mind should be dissipated.”

“ Lowly, my heart, be lowly !
Follow the paths of old ;
The feather riseth lightly,
But never so the gold.

The stream descending fast
Has gathered quietly, slowly,
A river rolls at last,—
Therefore, my soul, be lowly.”

It was characteristic of Shillitoe that, when at Buxton for his health, he went one morning to the men’s bathing-room for the poor, and, finding their comfort was shamefully neglected, he communicated with the Duke of Devonshire, the result being that the necessary improvements were made.

Thomas Shillitoe was in his seventy-third year when, in the summer of 1826, he started for extensive service in the United States and Canada, an engagement which occupied about three years. His passage had been engaged in the packet-ship *Pacific*, but it was afterwards proposed that he should sail in a merchantman instead ; the captain

of the packet feared that he could not arrange for his comfort, because the numerous cabin-passengers consisted chiefly of gay young men, who might cause him much annoyance if they sat up late to sing, dance, and drink. But Shillitoe did not feel that he could make this change unless he had clear evidence that it was right to do so. He visited the packet with a few friends, and writes :—

“ We took our seats in the cabin ; my spirit was bowed in humble prostration before the throne of Divine grace, accompanied with earnest desires to be favoured with all-sufficient help. . . . I was favoured to get into that quiet where alone the voice of the true Shepherd is to be known, and a clear sense was, as I believed, given me that I must submit to have my passage secured in the *Pacific*. ”*

* A passage in Thomas Shillitoe’s Journal during his visit to Holland also refers to the guidance of the Lord :—“ Our friend Jacobas Rocquet informed me she had a request to make from the preacher we were in company with last evening, that I would tell him how I was able to ascertain that my call to leave my own home to travel on a religious errand was of Divine requiring,—saying a lad was in waiting, with pen, ink, and paper, to furnish him with my reply. I felt disposed to do my best to answer this extraordinary question, as I considered it to be from a professed minister of the Gospel ; but the lad making slow progress I took the pen :—‘ How are we to know that which we apprehend to be a duty is of Divine requiring ? Answer.—In the first place by our endeavouring to get out of ourselves ; then to turn our attention inward unto Christ Jesus, putting our whole trust in Him, agreeably to His own declaration, ‘ As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself

It is interesting to find that he seems to have won the respect of all on board. With his wonted simplicity he says that he saw that much would depend on his acting "in the onset as courteously and affably as I could towards all, at the same time not countenancing actions or expressions when duty called upon me to rebuke ; but being careful at all times to feel the necessity laid upon me so to do, and that it be done in the spirit of love and meekness." Can we not, even now, enter into his feelings when Sunday came round ? At the breakfast table he proposed that an hour should be fixed on to sit down together to read the Scriptures. A general muster took place accordingly, when, after a short pause, a well-educated man, but "one of the most giddy in the company," offered to take Shillitoe's Bible and be the first reader. A silent pause followed the reading, and then what Shillitoe believed was given him to express was well received. He had not forgotten the steerage passengers and except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in Me." For He alone is the Wonderful Counsellor to all who ask wisdom of Him, to all who truly desire to be found going in and out before the people with acceptance in His sight. I have found from my own experience that as He is thus looked unto and depended upon, with earnest desires to be found doing His will and not our own, He renewedly condescends to qualify us to distinguish between the voice of Him, the true Shepherd, and the voice of the stranger ; and strengthens us to follow Him in the way He requires us to go."

the sailors ; but, before he suggested going to read to them, "a giddy young man"—as he calls him—proposed that this should be done, and offered to accompany him, whilst some others tendered their help as readers. In the evening a portion of Scripture was again read, and all retired to rest at an early hour, Shillitoe with a thankful heart that he had not abandoned the plan of sailing in the *Pacific*. Week after week a somewhat similar record is made.

No doubt the consistent conduct of the unpretending Quaker, made attractive as it was by his genial manners and pleasant smile, was appreciated by the thoughtless company, and had a considerable influence on their conduct. During the whole voyage he never heard an immoral song. With that peaceable wisdom which cometh from above, he did not expect from his fellow-passengers "more," he tells us, "than would be consistent with their education, manner of bringing up, natural disposition, and advancement—if they had known any—in religion." When one day a thoughtless youth acted in a manner which caused Shillitoe to interfere, the reproof was received with thanks. Of the last Sunday morning meeting at sea he writes :—

"I thought the Great Master fulfilled His gracious promise of being in the midst of us ; we separated under feelings of that holy solemnity which nothing

of the creaturely part can possibly effect. . . . A kind Providence had given me a considerable place in the minds of most, if not all, on board."

His service in America was of a peculiarly trying nature, for he had to throw himself into the difficulties of the Society of Friends there, caused by the promulgation, by Elias Hicks and some others, of doctrines wholly at variance with New Testament teaching. It was said of Hicks, by one who knew him well, that—

"With all his pretensions to the guidance of the light of Christ, he rejected it. He believed in nothing more than human reason, which was what he meant by the term he so often used,—immediate revelation,—declaring that without it we should not know a tree from a horse, nor a horse from a man. It was therefore the rejection of the doctrine of Holy Scripture respecting the guidance of the Spirit of Christ in the soul of man, which led him into his errors."

Thomas Shillitoe's visit to the Indians of the Seneca tribe must have been a refreshing episode in his American labours. Their chief, Wondonglutha, took off his hat, and in a welcoming address said—

"Brother, we understand you have come a long journey from a distant country, and have crossed the great salt water, and, amongst others, to visit

us Red people living in this place. Brother, the Good Spirit must have strengthened your mind in so great an undertaking, and we hope He will be with you and protect you on your way. We are now ready to hear what you may have on your mind to say to us."

Although slavery was still countenanced by Christian nations, Shillitoe, at personal risk, pleaded with slave-owners on behalf of their oppressed slaves. At Baltimore, from a feeling of religious duty, he visited a great slave-merchant, a man of a ferocious temperament, who, not long before, had thrown down in the street a Friend who was an abolitionist, and so trampled upon him as to endanger his life. He had on his premises a large building like a prison, for confining his living merchandise until complete sets could be made up to send to different places, according to the demand. What Shillitoe had heard of the character of this man, and of the fierceness of his large dogs, made him feel much for the Friend who accompanied him.

"As we advanced towards the house," he says, "one of these great fierce-looking animals came out at us, followed by another of the like kind, as if they would have seized us; their noise soon brought out the slave-merchant, whose countenance looked as fierce as his animals, querying with us in a stern

commanding manner, ‘What is your business?’ I offered him my hand, feeling nothing in my heart but love towards him as a man, saying I would be obliged to him to suffer me to have a little conversation with him. He asked us into his house; on my requesting him to have the dogs taken care of, saying I was a nervous man, he attended to it. He showed us into a very elegantly furnished parlour; on the shelf of the chimney-piece was a pistol, which appeared to be ready cocked for use. He ordered us to take a seat on the sofa and placed himself near us. I gave him my certificates to read, which he appeared to do attentively; this afforded us an opportunity for having our minds brought into quiet. When he returned my certificates, the reading of which appeared to have somewhat softened him, he said, ‘I suppose you are going about preaching the Gospel.’ I then endeavoured, in a tender, feeling, but decided manner, to open the subject that brought me to his house, telling him I came on behalf of the poor coloured people. I requested him to pause for a moment, and endeavour as much as possible to place his own parents and nearest relatives in the very situation of those poor creatures he purchased and sold again, thereby separating husbands from wives, and children from parents, with more to the

same effect. He appeared to hear me patiently, and tried to justify his conduct, but with coolness and deliberation, . . . yet saying, we thought feelingly, ‘It is a bad business,’ but that even some who were making much profession of religion urged him to go on with it; but in time it was evidently manifest that the Divine witness was so reached in him as to compel him to cast away all his mental weapons of self-defence. We thought we never witnessed the declaration that the lion should lie down with the lamb more fully exemplified. He assured us of his determination to quit the business, and, acknowledging the gratitude he felt for the visit, took his leave of us in an affectionate manner, conducting us himself quite off his premises.”

When writing of another call on a slaveholder, Shillitoe says that on his way to the house he became discouraged as he thought of what it would be best to say to him, but that all fears were taken away as with power the saying of the great Master arose in his mind, “Take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak.”

In the autumn of 1829 he returned from America, and did not again leave home on any extensive Gospel service. In 1832, accompanied by Peter Bedford, he had a satisfactory interview with King William IV. and his Queen. The fol-

lowing passages are from an address of Shillitoe, which was printed for circulation in 1831:—

“To all who are making a profession of the Christian name.

“I cannot doubt but that a desire to do a great stroke of business, get great riches, and make a great figure in the world, is as much some men’s besetting sin as ever the love of strong drink has been that of others. An overcharge of business, and a desire to make a splendid appearance in the world, must disqualify a man for a faithful discharge of his civil and religious duties. . . . Happy had it been for many in the seasons of sore conflict which Commerce has of later years experienced, had they willingly and timely yielded to those Divine intimations they had been favoured with.”

Further on he appeals to women, and asks them to be willing to do their part:—

“With you rests the management of household affairs. Examine closely the mode and circumstances of your expenditure with a mind fully made up to relieve, as much as in you lies, the head of the family, who may have both wind and tide to contend with. Where it is needful, search your houses, search your tables, search your garments, and, where any expense can be spared, seek for holy help to pursue the path of Christian moderation.”

He also strongly recommends purchasing with ready money.

Long before the formation of the Temperance Society, Shillitoe had taken a strong interest in the cause of Temperance. From mistaken medical advice he had, when young, taken a large quantity of alcoholic liquor, as a supposed remedy for a nervous complaint brought on by a fright in boyhood : this treatment naturally increased the severity of the attacks of hypochondria, and his sufferings were great. Another doctor advised him to make a complete change in his manner of living, and, earnestly praying for help, he at once gave up the use of all alcoholic stimulants. He was then about the age of forty-three ; his health gradually but steadily improved, and in his eightieth year, when addressing a meeting of the Temperance Society in Exeter Hall, he was able to say that he was stronger than he had been fifty years before, and that from the time of becoming an abstainer he had never had an attack of hypochondria. He also spoke, from personal experience, of the uselessness of ardent spirits when enduring exposure to great cold. He had walked a distance of six miles to that meeting, and walked back again to his home at Tottenham. His journeys in England were often performed on foot, and he must have valued them as opportunities for quiet reflection.

He was remarkably diligent in his attendance of meetings, and less than a fortnight before his death attended a sitting of the Yearly Meeting of Ministers and Elders. To one of his friends he said :—

“ I feel I have nothing to depend upon but the mercies of God in Christ Jesus ; I do not rely for salvation upon any merits of my own. . . . My faith is in the merits of Christ Jesus, and in the offering He made for us. I trust my past sins are all forgiven me, that they have been washed away in the blood of Christ who died for my sins. It is mercy I want, and mercy I have.”

At another time he said :—

“ Oh, what should I have been now if I had not submitted to His baptism, the baptism of fire. . . . Oh the balm, the oil, poured into my wounds for my shortcomings. My love is to everybody all the world over, even the worst sinner.”

He died in 1836, at the ripe age of eighty-two.

“ Thine was the seed time ; God alone
Beholds the end of what is sown ;
Beyond our vision weak and dim,
The harvest time is hid with Him.”

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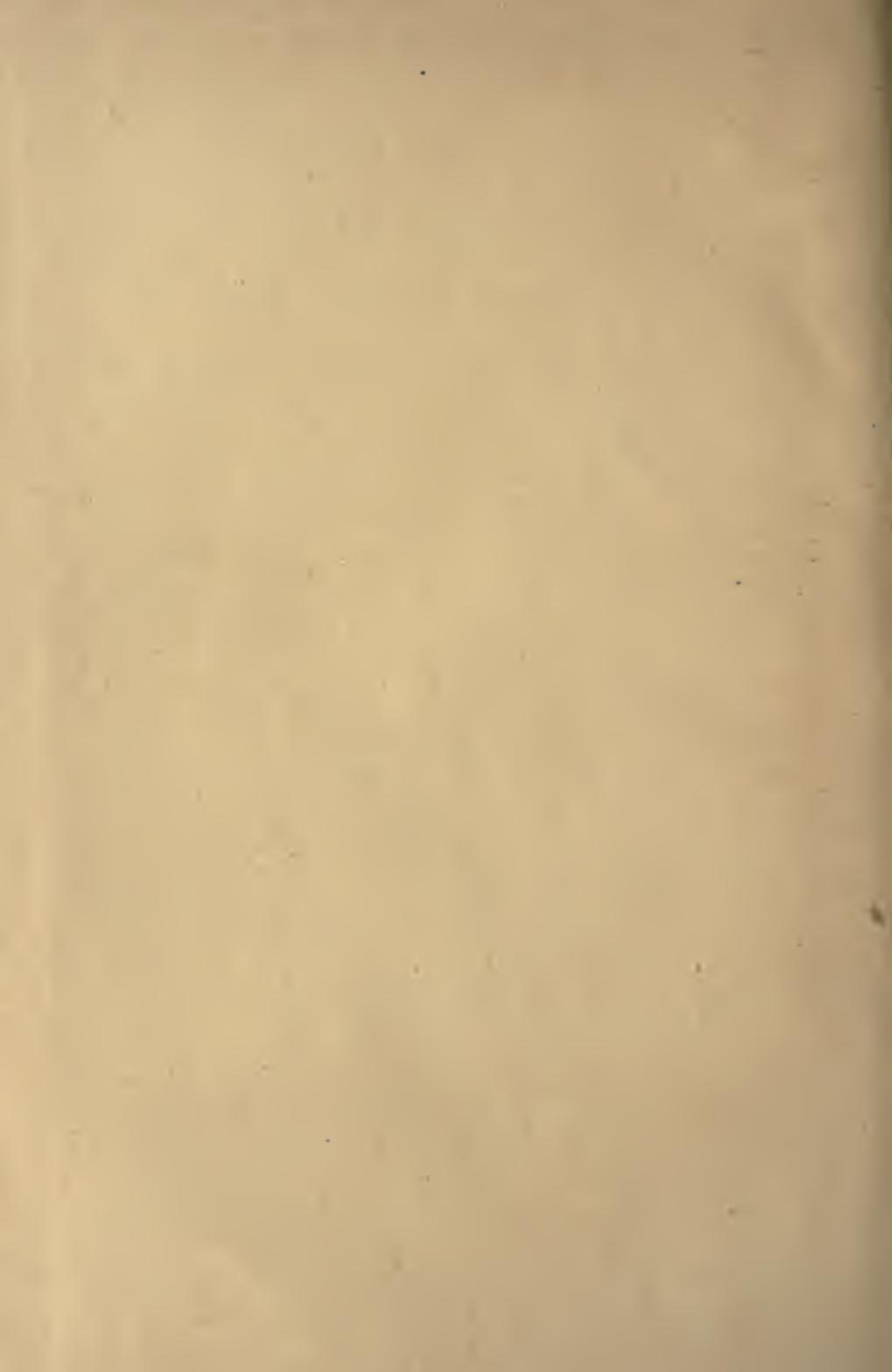
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